HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

HUMA • NUMBER 105 • 1st SESSION • 42nd PARLIAMENT

EVIDENCE

Monday, May 28, 2018

Chair

Mr. Bryan May

Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities

Monday, May 28, 2018

● (1545)

[*English*]

The Chair (Mr. Bryan May (Cambridge, Lib.)): Welcome, everybody. While you are getting settled there, we'll introduce everybody.

Pursuant to Standing—

Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley—Aldergrove, CPC): I have a point of order.

The Chair: A point of order, Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I have a quick question on quorum before we proceed, and this is for my own edification.

A quorum is the majority of the committee. Does there have to be a voting member of the opposition to have quorum? For example, we have five members. My understanding is that you are not included in that quorum count.

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Mark Warawa: So we have five, and then a majority of the committee would be six. Doing that math, for this committee to make any decisions would it require a member of the opposition to be the sixth member, or do we have the Standing Orders in such a way that there could be no members of the official opposition, and the government could just bulldoze forward?

The Chair: I stand to be corrected, but I believe it's considered a courtesy, but it's not a rule.

Mr. Mark Warawa: What is the number for quorum in this committee?

The Chair: It's six. It's a majority.

Mr. Mark Warawa: In that majority is the chair considered part of the quorum?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Mark Warawa: The chair is a non-voting member, so can't help make decisions, but is part of the quorum count.

The Chair: Correct. It's considered a courtesy.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Pursuant to the order of reference of Thursday, February 1, 2018, we are considering Bill C-62, an act to amend the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act and other acts. We are joined here today by—

Yes.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney (Bellechasse—Les Etchemins—Lévis, CPC): I would like to say something, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Is this a point of order, sir?

Mr. Mark Warawa: No. You have the floor.

You had recognized him.

The Chair: Is this a point of order, sir?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: No, it is not a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, then I'm going to continue, please.

[*Translation*]

L'hon. Steven Blaney: Actually, I am planning to table a motion this afternoon.

I want to thank the public servants who are here...

[*English*]

The Chair: This is out of order, okay? If you have a point of order, we'll continue, but we've—

Mr. Mark Warawa: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, you recognized Mr. Blaney. He got your attention.

The Chair: I asked him if he had a point of order, and he said he did not, and now I would like to continue to Bill C-62.

Mr. Mark Warawa: You gave him the floor. My point of order is —

The Chair: Are you debating a point of order right now?

Mr. Mark Warawa: No.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Mark Warawa: My point of order is that when you recognize somebody, anybody around this table, and you give them the floor, you cannot remove them from the floor saying your recognition was assumed on a point of order. You recognized him, you gave him the floor, he then has the floor. For you to interrupt him is against the Standing Orders, so the floor is Mr. Blaney's.

The Chair: Okay.

Mr. Blaney.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I want to thank you first of all for giving me the opportunity to speak this afternoon. I would point out once again that I intend to table a motion this afternoon so the committee can continue to be as effective as it has been in recent months and to ensure the full cooperation of each of its members. As you know, the success of the committee and of its work depends on a climate of trust, and the official opposition considers that this trust has been undermined for various reasons, but there is no point rehashing the past.

That said, three ministers attended the meeting on May 23, 2018. The goal was to approve the votes in the Main Estimates. For various reasons, however, the committee members, including government and opposition members alike, were not able to ask any questions at all. That is why I am tabling my motion. I will read it out and will then explain why, in my opinion, it could resolve the committee's current impasse. The trust and respect of each member must be restored.

Before I read the motion, I want to point out that, on May 23, the committee's schedule was disrupted by measures in the House of Commons, that I would go so far as to describe as stalling tactics. It was an unusual situation. What the steering committee had planned was thwarted and we were caught off guard. As members of the opposition, we consider it extremely important to preserve the right and need to ask questions, especially for budget votes.

My motion is as follows:

> That, in relation to the study of the Main Estimates 2018-19, the Committee invite the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development, the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour, and the Minister of Sports and Persons with Disabilities; that the Committee request that the ministers appear for questions from all members on or before Wednesday, June 13, 2018.

We appreciate the fact that the ministers appeared before the committee, but, as I said, we were unfortunately unable to ask them any questions. Asking questions is a fundamental right of parliamentarians. We would like to pick up the meeting where we left off, which is after the ministers had given their presentations. Moreover, we do not think those presentations were necessary in this context, since the committee had started half an hour later than scheduled. After that, there was a vote right in the middle of the committee's work, and then another at the very end of the meeting.

We want to serve our role as parliamentarians. It is important to me that members of the Conservative Party and all the other members are able to exercise this democratic right of asking questions. If the ministers appear but do not have the opportunity to take questions on an issue we consider important, we are not completing the process. We have questions to ask those ministers. I would even suggest that this take place this Wednesday, because that is the time available to the committee to approve the Main Estimates. It could be a way of turning the page and concluding this episode in which we were unable to achieve the desired results owing to certain circumstances.

Once again, the fundamental issue is that three ministers appeared before us but no questions were asked in the end. I am confident that the ministers were prepared to answer the opposition's questions.

Ministers are part of the executive branch. As the legislative branch, we are one of the three pillars of our system of government. It is an important element. People often point out that the oral question period is not the only important aspect; the work done in committees is also important. We have important questions to ask, specifically to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Labour and to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development.

● (1550)

As you know, Mr. Chair, in previous conversations we have had the opportunity to acknowledge the committee's important role. Parliamentarians must be allowed to exercise their right to ask questions. At the committee's last meeting, however, votes were held in the House of Commons to limit debate on parliamentary reform. That is something of paradox: the government prides itself on its sunny ways and promotes transparency, which we recommend, but it seems they are taking additional measures to muzzle the opposition, as I said last Wednesday. That is the reason for this motion. We recognize that the government has a majority, but we consider this motion necessary to restore trust and to ensure the full co-operation of the opposition.

We want to do our work and co-operate with the government, provided that the climate of trust is restored. We consider it essential for the ministers to appear again to answer our questions in order to restore the climate of trust. We could suggest to the ministers, at a subsequent appearance, that they submit their notes to us in writing. As to their appearance regarding the budget votes, we have important questions for them and we consider it important to ask them those questions.

Once again, we would like the three ministers to appear before the committee next Wednesday to answer our questions. We know the ministers are extremely busy, but we are flexible and can accommodate their schedule in order to complete the process that began somewhat chaotically.

I would point out once again that the government held votes in the House. I would consider it completely unacceptable not to be able to ask questions of the ministers. In previous conversations, you mentioned that the House of Commons is entering a very intense period. The next four weeks will be hectic. We can make sure it all goes smoothly if we are allowed to exercise our role and ask questions. That would create a win-win situation.

That is why this motion is being put forward this afternoon. The motion has been tabled and presented to the committee. All the members have reviewed it. I am sure that the committee members know what happened at the last meeting and that the official opposition would like to ask questions in the interest of transparency. We are impatient to see the ministers and to ask them questions, within the parameters set by the committee. That would not only allow us to complete the last meeting, but also to restore trust, which is so important. I think we can restore that trust. As you know, the committee has done good work. It has tabled reports and studied the bill on harassment and violence in the workplace, among other things. I am also very proud of the committee's work. We want this to continue. In my view, it is important for each member of the committee to have the opportunity to do so.

I recognize that, when ministers appear before the committee, not all the members will necessarily be present, but at least one member of each party should be in attendance. It will be up to each party to work together to get to the bottom of the matter.

We are talking about several billions of dollars. There are important issues at stake. There are issues that we need answers on. Committees are the established forum and that is how we proceed. I am sure the ministers would appreciate closing the loop by returning to the committee to answer questions. Moreover, they have been co-operative, since they did return. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, we were unable to get answers to our questions.

● (1555)

Essentially, three ministers appeared, but we did not have the opportunity to ask them questions. We want to complete the process. That is why we would like them to come back and, as I said, I am willing to be flexible.

I would once again suggest this Wednesday. Why that day? Because it is the last day we have scheduled to approve the votes in the main estimates.

I am sure that, as the chair, you would like in a sense to put your stamp of approval on the main estimates that the ministers presented to us. I cannot presume to know how they will answer, but ministers are usually well prepared to answer our questions. At the end of the process, we will be pleased to co-operate and consider approving the main estimates. As it stands right now, it is hard for us to offer our co-operation because we think being able to ask the government questions is an important part of our work as parliamentarians, but we have not been able to do that. This of course undermines our trust.

We truly want the committee to function effectively and respectfully. It is of course a partisan forum, and we know that we will not always agree on all the issues. As long as there is trust and good will, however, we can achieve good results for the people who elected us.

That is why the motion is before you, Mr. Chair. We want to complete the process that we began last week by having the opportunity to ask the ministers questions during the committee's proceedings.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Fortier, please.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk (Battlefords—Lloydminster, CPC): I have a point of order.

The Chair: Rosemarie.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I wanted to note, Chair, that you had seen that my colleague Mark and I both had our hands up, and you proceeded to go to the Liberal side of the table and were looking for somebody to put their hand up.

The Chair: I have you both on the list.

Mrs. Mona Fortier (Ottawa—Vanier, Lib.): My hand is up already.

Mr. Mark Warawa: May I speak to that point of order?

The Chair: No.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: I'm next.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I challenge the decision of the chair that I cannot speak to the point of order.

The Chair: Points of order are not debatable.

Mr. Mark Warawa: No, it's not debate, but you can speak. A member can speak to the point of order.

Is that your ruling?

The Chair: Yes.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Okay, I challenge the chair's ruling. Shall the decision of the chair stand? I'd like a recorded vote.

(Ruling of the chair sustained: yeas 5; nays 4)

● (1600)

The Chair: MP Fortier.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I move that the debate be now adjourned.

The Chair: All those in favour of the debate being now adjourned on this motion.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, I would like to request a recorded division, please.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

[*English*]

The Chair: MP Fortier.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Mr. Chair, I move that we proceed now to the next order of business. Thank you very much.

The Chair: All those in favour of proceeding to the next order of business.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I would like a recorded vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

The Chair: We will be proceeding to the next order of the day. Thank you for your time today, gentlemen. Hopefully in the near future I'll be able to read your names into the record to show you were here.

We will be bringing in the next group of witnesses, and we'll be moving forward to the next stage in experiential learning.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I have a point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Warawa, you have a point of order.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you, Chair.

I'm referring to Bosc and Gagnon. It says on page 323, "When in the Chair, the Speaker embodies the power and authority of the office.... He or she must at all times show, and be seen to show, the impartiality required to sustain the trust and goodwill of the House."

Chair, in chapter 20 under "Committees"—again in Bosc and Gagnon—on pages 1038 and 1040, it says:

> The Chair is a key figure in any committee. Chairs are so important that when a committee does not have one, it is not considered properly constituted. It can undertake no work or other activities, and cannot exercise any of its powers. Committee chairs have procedural, administrative, and representative responsibilities.... Chairs preside over committee meetings and oversee committee work. They recognize the members, witnesses, and other people who wish to speak at these meetings.

Again, Chair, it's to be done in an impartial way.

Chair, —

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Warawa, is there a standing order that has been contravened? From what I'm hearing, you're simply repeating the motion that was in the House. If this isn't a point of order, we're going to move forward.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, we're at committee. This is nothing to do with what's happened in the House.

The Chair: I understand, but is there a standing order that has been contravened that you want to reference right now?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Yes, Chair. I would like an opportunity to speak. I had my hand up previous to others and did not have a chance to speak.

The Chair: I already ruled on that point of order. Do you have another point of order, a standing order specifically, which has been contravened and which you can refer to right now? Otherwise, I'm going to have to move on.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Gentlemen. I apologize. Please sit tight.

I'm going to finish presenting you and actually mention your names.

From the Treasury Board Secretariat, we have Drew Heavens, executive director, compensation and labour relations sector. We have Don Graham, executive director, office of the chief human resources officer. We have Dennis Duggan, labour relations consultant, compensation and labour relations sector. We have Michael Gager, advisor and economist, expenditure analysis and compensation planning, expenditure management sector.

● (1605)

We are going to start now with clause-by-clause. First of all, thank you, gentlemen, for being here today

Shall clause 1 carry?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, I would like to say something please.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Blaney.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, thank you very much for finally giving me the chance to speak. I think that is one of your prerogatives.

During our consideration of the bill, I asked the public servants an important question about the cost of the sick leave that public servants take before they retire. Did we get an answer?

[*English*]

The Chair: No.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Okay.

Mr. Chair, you know—

[*English*]

The Chair: We may have. If so, it would have been distributed to everybody.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: I did not see the answer, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

The Chair: We will look into it.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Okay.

That information is extremely important. You will recall that, initially, the financial impact of the federal act that was tabled was projected to be in the order of 800 to 900 million dollars. I am talking about the value of the sick leave. The government witnesses, on the other hand, referred to an amount of $1.3 billion. So it is a substantial amount.

A significant part of that amount is used to pay for sick leave taken prior to retirement. That is in fact what I asked at that committee meeting. We know how it works in the public service: some people take their sick leave before they retire. I had asked what that adds up to and how many people do that.

It could be several hundreds of millions of dollars. It seems very important to me therefore to make sure we have all the information we need to review his bill before it is passed. To my knowledge, that information has not yet been provided to us. That is why I am tabling the following motion this afternoon:

> That clause-by-clause consideration of Bill C-62, An Act to amend the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act and other Act, be postponed until the Committee has received in both official languages, in writing, the answer to the question concerning the cost and number of public servants who retire after using their bank of sick leave and that this information be provided to the Committee.

Mr. Chair, once again, I want to reassure you that you can count on the opposition's full cooperation to make sure that taxpayers' money is well managed.

During our consideration of the bill, we talked about what I would even describe as a fool's deal in certain ways. In order to maintain excellent staff relations, on the one hand, it is important to make sure that taxpayers' money is well managed. On the other hand, in its good faith dealings with employee representatives, the government must have the necessary legislative tools and means not only to have the best employees in the public service, but also to protect taxpayers' money.

That is why I maintain that, until this essential information is provided to the committee in both official languages, it would be superfluous and truly premature to proceed with the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill. In order to do a thorough job and adopt a bill that will benefit all Canadian taxpayers, protect their interests, and respect workers, I think we need this information.

I would like to add something. It does happen at times that the information we request is not immediately available. In the interest of our committee's work, and with the consent of the committee and the witnesses, be they public servants or not, we must receive that information in a timely manner.

The request I am referring to was made several weeks ago, but we have still not received the information, unfortunately. We feel we cannot proceed with the clause-by-clause consideration of the bill until we get that information.

Thank you very much.

● (1610)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We do not have notice of this motion, so it's just being tabled.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: That is correct.

[*English*]

The Chair: All right. We can't, unfortunately, debate that until then, so I will be going to the members of—

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Excuse me, Mr. Chair...

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm moving forward with clause-by-clause. You cannot debate a motion until the notice has been served, so we have —

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, this motion pertains to the bill we are debating.

[*English*]

Can I speak, Mr. Chair? Mr. Chair, hello. *Bonjour.*

The Chair: It has to be tabled with the appropriate amount of time. We are going to move forward with clause-by-clause.

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, not if it's related to the bill we're debating. I think you should consult with your clerk before—

The Chair: Mark Warawa has a point of order.

Hon. Steven Blaney: I think you should seek advice from your clerk, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: I have, as always.

Mark Warawa, you have a point of order.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, my point of order is that a motion can be made to change if it's relevant to the discussion. The motion, I believe, is relevant. If you could, please share with us, in the Standing Orders or O'Brien and Bosc, where this is that you can say no to a motion if it is relevant to the discussion.

The Chair: The motion has just been tabled. It requires, as usual, 48 hours' notice to actually move a motion at committee.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, that is if it has nothing to do with what's being discussed. If we are discussing Bill C-62, and this is in direct relationship to Bill C-62, then it's relevant to the discussion.

The Chair: If it's relevant to the clause that I'm attempting to move at that particular moment, you would be correct, but I don't believe that it is, if you read which clause we're on. I would like to move forward, if that's okay.

Shall clause 1 carry—

Mr. Mark Warawa: Mr. Chair, I would like to speak to it.

Chair, I have a point of order.

The Chair: Mr. Warawa.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, you have people who are waving and calling to you, saying we want to discuss this. You've said, by your actions, I don't want to hear from you. We couldn't—

The Chair: Do you have a point of order, Mr. Warawa?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Yes, this is a point of order, Chair.

Hon. Steven Blaney: I have one too, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Chair, the point of order is that this is clause-by-clause. Clause-by-clause means that we discuss before we vote. Clause-by-clause, under the Liberal definition, still means you discuss before you vote. To say—

The Chair: This motion that was just put forth is not—

Mr. Mark Warawa: While we were waving, saying, we want to discuss it, Chair, you went ahead and called a vote, and again ignored the opposition. You figuratively banged down the gavel on us, saying, "we don't want to hear from you, we want to just move forward".

Chair, a power—

● (1615)

The Chair: Do you have a point of order, sir?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Yes, I do.

The Chair: Please get to it.

Mr. Mark Warawa: We have a right to speak to—

The Chair: Do you have a point of order, sir?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Yes, I do.

The Chair: Then please tell us what that happens to be.

Mr. Mark Warawa: The point of order is that we have the right to speak to the clause before the vote is held.

The Chair: This isn't a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: I have a point of order, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa: I challenge the decision of the chair.

The Chair: What was explained to me was that the motion is relevant if it has to do with the clause that we're debating at this particular time. It is not, and it's not an issue. Clause 1 of this bill is not referred to in any way by this motion.

Mr. Mark Warawa: What motion? There is not a motion on the floor.

The Chair: There was just a motion on the floor.

Mr. Mark Warawa: You introduced a motion, saying, shall it carry? We said, no, we want to speak to it. You went ahead and called the vote before allowing us. Are you saying, Chair, that we do not have the right to speak to any of these clauses, that you're just going to pass them and say—

The Chair: Of course, I'm not saying that, sir.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Then we want to speak to clause 1, which is on essential service. We want to speak to it before you call the vote. May we speak to it?

The Chair: Is that what is actually being asked here? You said you had a point of order, sir.

Mr. Mark Warawa: I asked you a question, Chair. Will you give us—

The Chair: And I'm asking you a question. What is your point of order? Every time I've given you guys the floor you've used stall tactic after stall tactic—every single time. You talk about trust. I'm asking you, you said you have a point of order, and what is that point of order?

Mr. Mark Warawa: I have said it numerous times and I will repeat it, Chair. The point of order is I would like, and some of my colleagues would like, to speak to clause 1 prior to your calling a vote. Will you recognize us, opposition members, and give us an opportunity to speak to clause 1, which amends the definition of "essential service"? May I have that right?

The Chair: If you wish to debate the merits or concerns around clause 1, yes.

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you very much.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, I have a point of order.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Blaney has a point of order.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, thank you once again for giving me the floor.

I want to make sure you understood me correctly. The reason for this point of order—

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Blaney, do you have a point of order?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Yes.

[*English*]

The Chair: Okay, I am sorry.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: If you keep interrupting me, I'll never be able to finish, Mr. Chair.

Perhaps you didn't fully understand my motion, but it deals directly with the study before the committee, Bill C-62, An Act to amend the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act and other Acts. We are hearing from witnesses today on the bill. My motion is directly related to what the committee is currently studying. If you feel the need, you can check with the clerk.

As things stand, we cannot proceed with our study of the bill because we are missing key information. We are talking about several hundreds of millions of dollars, and we don't know exactly where that money is or how it has been allocated.

The reason for my point of order is this: I want more information about the billion dollars that the government is content to let slide. We need to know exactly where that money is coming from, how it is being allocated, and whether it will be possible to make up the shortfall.

In short, my motion is tied to the bill our committee is studying.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Blaney, I apologize, but you're continuing to debate your motion. This is not a point of order on this issue. We are looking at clause 1.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair—

[*English*]

The Chair: I would like to go back to Mr. Warawa, who had said he would like to debate the turnaround, if possible.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, I am not debating my motion.

[*English*]

What I'm saying is the motion I tabled is directly related to what we have in front of us, and this is exactly what is at stake here. That's why this motion, I feel, is receivable. I ask you to reconsider or make the appropriate decision, which is—

Mrs. Mona Fortier: I have a point of order.

Hon. Steven Blaney: —the fact that this motion is relevant to the subject we have in front of us this afternoon.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Fortier.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: This is debate. We want to pursue on the current—

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Warawa actually has the floor, and I would give it back to him.

● (1620)

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you.

The Chair: He wished to discuss clause 1.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Steven Blaney: Mr. Chair, I'd like you to come back to my point of order.

[*English*]

Mr. Mark Warawa: Thank you, Chair. I'm quite sure that I have colleagues beside me who would also like to speak to this. I hope you will permit them the same privilege that you've given me. I do appreciate it.

We are now under proposed subsection 1(1), which provides a definition of "essential service". The existing definition, under subsection 4(1) of the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act, says:

> 4(1) The following definitions apply in this Part.
>
> essential service means a service, facility or activity of the Government of Canada that has been determined under subsection 119(1) to be essential. (*services essentiels*)
>
> essential services agreement [Repealed, 2013, c. 40, s. 294]
>
> mediator means a person appointed as a mediator under subsection 108(1). (*médiateur*)
>
> National Joint Council [Repealed, 2017, c. 9, s. 4]
>
> parties, in relation to collective bargaining, arbitration, conciliation or a dispute, means the employer and the bargaining agent. (*parties*)
>
> public interest commission means a commission established under Division 10. (*commission de l'intérêt public*)

National Joint Council means the National Joint Council whose establishment was authorised by the order in council dated May 16, 1944.

Chair, the new provision, proposed under Bill C-62, is that the very clear definition of "essential service" will be changed substantially. The new provision would say:

> 1(1) The definition essential service in subsection 4(1) of the Federal Public Sector Labour Relations Act is replaced by the following:
>
> essential service means a service, facility or activity of the Government of Canada that is or will be, at any time, necessary for the safety or security of the public or a segment of the public. (*services essentiels*)

Chair, I'm trying to understand where we are and where the government wants to take us in Bill C-62.

I think the definition that we have right now is actually much clearer, and it's important that legislation be clear, that we as legislators understand what it is, and that arbitrators understand what the intent of the legislation is.

For example, on the government web page, Government of Canada Guidelines for Essential Services Designations, under the heading "What is an essential service?", it says, "...an 'essential service' is defined as 'any service, facility or activity of the Government of Canada [that] is or will be necessary for the safety or security of the public or a segment of the public.' "

Chair—surprise—that is the exact wording of Bill C-62. Should the government make the changes to their website prior to the passing of Bill C-62? I think not. That is a concern, but they have already made those changes.

It goes on to explain, "Examples of government services or activities that may be considered essential include, but are not limited to: border safety/security...".

Chair, I have heard again the importance of clarity and definitions, and this is the foundation...a definition of what we are talking about. In terms of border safety and security, we are seeing problems at the border. The fact is that I had a border officer approach me who did not want to be named because he works for the Government of Canada. He was very concerned that there are people being moved from our ports of entry to deal with the influx of illegal immigration and refugees who are going between the legal points of entry.

Is that an essential service? I believe it is, but that essential service is being pressured because of decisions of the government to advertise on Facebook, Twitter, and whatnot that you can enter Canada illegally and then move to the front of the line. I don't think that's fair, and I wish the government would change their messaging on illegal border crossing.

● (1625)

Chair, the next one on the list of essential Government of Canada services is Correctional Service Canada. For our federal institutions that are an essential service, it is extremely important that we make sure anybody who is serving federal time in a penal institution is kept locked up, and that it is properly supervised and managed.

Chair, under the Correctional Service we have minimum, medium, and maximum security institutions. In our riding, we have all of them. These are all for sentences that are for two years and more. Two years less a day would be served in a provincial or territorial institution.

When I say they are in an institution during a warrant period, during their sentence, if it's less than two years, then it would be provincial or territorial, but we're dealing with much more serious crime, usually an indictable offence. There are summary and indictable convictions. I won't digress about Bill C-75 that wants to make youth terrorism a summary conviction with a fine instead of being a serious indictable offence for which they could do some federal time if appropriate, but the Correctional Service is essential to keeping Canadians safe.

The next one is food inspection activities. How important is it to make sure that the food in Canada is healthy and good? It is essential —I think we would all agree with that—so they have to know what is the definition of an "essential service". Chair, the clearer we make that definition, the better.

On accident safety investigations, I was involved with that at a provincial level. It is very important when we have an accident, through Transport Canada, that accident safety investigators be available and be available now. When we have a serious plane crash where somebody has died, there has to be an investigator, so again, that is an essential service. It is critically important that we know what the definition is.

The definition on the government website also goes on to say that income and social security.... My responsibility, Chair, is income security for seniors. All of this means it is really important that we know what the definition of "essential service" is.

Chair, at this point, I think it is important that we support the existing provision because it's clear. It's more specific, and I would not support changing the definition under Bill C-62 proposed subsection 1(1), but I look forward to hearing from my colleagues.

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Long, please.

Mr. Wayne Long (Saint John—Rothesay, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

I'd like to propose, Chair, that we move on to the next point of business. We have witnesses here of experiential learning, so I'd like to propose that we move on and hear our witnesses.

The Chair: All those in favour of moving on to the next order of business?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: It is almost unanimous.

We will move on to the next order of business.

Gentleman, I apologize. You can go. Thank you very much.

We will suspend.

● (1625)

(Pause)

● (1630)

The Chair: Welcome back, everybody. Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), we are getting started again with our experiential learning study on pathways to employment for Canadian youth. This hour is specifically dedicated to volunteerism, and we're very pleased to have with us via video conference, as an individual, Wolfgang Lehmann, who is associate professor in the department of sociology at Western University. Welcome.

Also joining us is Luisa Atkinson, who is director of first nation housing at the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Welcome to you, and to Paula Speevak, president and chief executive officer of Volunteer Canada.

Each of you will have seven minutes for opening remarks followed by a couple of rounds of questions from my colleagues. First up we have Mr. Wolfgang Lehmann. The next seven minutes are all yours, sir.

Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann (Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, Western University, As an Individual): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and distinguished committee members, for giving me the opportunity to speak today about my research and how it relates to the issue of youth transitions and the role of extracurricular experiences or experiential learning experiences in this transition.

Today is about volunteering. I'm not an expert on volunteering, but some of my research has links to it. Volunteering is an important part of our lives in Canada; I think we can all agree on that. It brings individuals and communities together.

Today in my seven minutes I also want to highlight a few problems that arise when we instrumentalize volunteering as a central aspect of how young people transition from education to employment.

As undergraduate degrees have become more common, employers, and also admission committees to graduate and post-graduate programs, increasingly look at other things that can distinguish one candidate from another. Volunteering, preferably in leadership roles and with organizations related to one's career goal, has become one of these ways in which young people can gain distinction on the labour market. Other ways to stand out from the crowd are through job placements, internships, having studied abroad, and so forth.

This sounds like a very reasonable way of making hiring and admission decisions, no doubt about that. After all, you want to hire and admit people into your programs who have gained some experience in the field and who know what they are getting themselves into. Yet there's also a somewhat darker side to this process, as the research I will be presenting and some other scholars' work suggests.

I'm going to start with a study in the U.K. that was published in 2009 by a group called the Panel on Fair Access to the Professions. Their report shows a somewhat troubling situation. It shows that although university enrolment has increased over the last few decades and become much more diverse than it used to be, at the same time the chances for low-income or working-class students to succeed in a professional career has declined. It's now harder for low-income or working-class students to become lawyers or doctors, at least in the U.K., than it was 20 or 30 years ago.

It's troubling, because such findings challenge our hope that success is based on merit. One of the key reasons for this development I've given in the report is the increase in the importance of unpaid work, such as volunteering and internships, in gaining access to professional opportunities.

To my knowledge—and you might correct me—we do not have data comparable to that in Canada. This is where my research can be of interest. I want to start with a small caveat. I do small-scale, interview-based research rather than large data analysis. I'm not making a claim that what I'm telling you right now can be generalized to all young people transitioning from education to work, but I am quite confident that the findings I am telling you about are of relevance and reflect the experiences of the young people I spoke to, and others who find themselves in similar situations.

In my study, I have followed about 40 young men and women over the four years of their undergraduate studies. They were all the first in their families to attend university. They all came from low-income or working-class backgrounds. All of them, it turned out, had incredibly high ambitions. Coming to university, they all wanted to end up in professional employment, and pretty much all of them ended up doing extremely well academically, at least those maintained in the study.

Yet, in the final interview I did with them in the fourth year of their undergraduate studies, they began to express to me very serious concerns about the ability to turn their academic success at university into later occupational success. The study participants spoke about not having the financial means to work for free as volunteers or unpaid interns, but also realized how important that has become to gain access to the kind of employment they were looking for. They also talked about lacking the right kinds of connections to get into those kinds of places in the first place. Perhaps you will allow me to give you a few examples.

Here's an example of a young woman who did exceptionally well at university. Throughout all her four years her goal was to go to medical school and become a doctor. In the end, that did not happen, but I'll come back to that. This is what she told me during the interview in her fourth year. "People that have more money have such an advantage in terms of what they can do. Like, they can just volunteer with the professor in a lab in the summer, and spend their whole summer doing that.... And then there's people like me that can't do that because they have to work 60 hours a week to pay for school. I was going to volunteer in a clinic in Nepal in second year, a whole bunch of my friends from residence went there to go do medical work; they loved it. And then I ended up not having enough money to go. Which is all right, but when I'm applying to med school or grad school, it gives those people who were able to do those things in the summer a leg up, so when I'm writing my med school application, I don't look as good."

● (1635)

This was a very common observation throughout the data. For a lot of these young people, the need to make money limited and affected their ability to work for free to gain that work experience that is now becoming so important.

At the same time, the work experience they did gain—for instance, as supermarket cashiers, on roadside construction, in retail in the mall, and so forth—was never seen as relevant for the kinds of jobs, careers, and graduate programs they wanted to get into.

Similarly, the study participants spoke about not having connections in the career fields to which they aspired, and therefore did not know how to find the right opportunities. Again, I will give you a little quote from a young man who wanted to become a dentist. He was looking for volunteer opportunities in a dental office at the time we spoke, in his fourth year. This is what he said. "I would love to get into a dental office and volunteer just to be a dental assistant, just to be in the back cleaning tools. I'll clean toilets, I just want to be in the building. My one friend works with his dad's best friend in the summer and he sees every procedure and gets to do everything like that, and that looks really good on a resumé, doesn't it? I can't see me getting that opportunity, and I've been hounding dentists all over."

These are just two examples that I'm giving you to highlight the disadvantages that arise when access to career and further education is strongly tied to extracurricular experiences, such as those gained in relatively exclusive forms of volunteering or work placements. In fact, I did manage to reinterview 20 of those 40 young men and women five years after they graduated, just a few years ago, and found out that out of the 20, only one ended up actually fulfilling his goal and going to medical school. Nobody else went to medical school or law school. Instead, people ended up either staying in graduate programs and doing criminology rather than law or found employment elsewhere. Many actually shifted their goals and rather than studying medicine became nurses. Nursing was a big shift in goals, I found.

Nobody made the case in those follow-up interviews that these changes, these shifting career goals, were the result of the types of disadvantages I mentioned, but they did tell me that they found that going into nursing was not only cheaper, which was a big issue for them, but that it also made it easier to get placement opportunities in a nursing or public health postgraduate program. Those who went to academia felt that maybe that would be more meritocratic than the other options they had initially considered.

Does that mean that employers' admission committees should not reward volunteer experiences? No, I wouldn't say that. I think volunteering is important. Volunteering in a legal aid office, or a law firm, or a school, or a hospital does offer important information, not just to employers, but it also helps young people to clarify career goals and gain very useful first-hand experience.

The point I'm trying to make, however, is that maybe we need to do a better job of levelling the playing field for young people to get access to such opportunities.

In conclusion, if you want professions to reflect the diversity of the populations they serve, we need to be aware of these types of potential barriers.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

● (1640)

The Chair: Thank you very much, sir.

Now we have, from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Luisa Atkinson, director, first nation housing. The next seven minutes are all yours.

Ms. Luisa Atkinson (Director, First Nation Housing, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, honourable members.

It's a pleasure to appear before you on behalf of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. CMHC is pleased to contribute to the committee's work. We share the desire to maximize opportunities for Canadian youth to succeed in the workplace and in life.

CMHC's mission is to help Canadians meet their housing needs. We want every Canadian to live somewhere that feels safe and feels like home. A home is a refuge and a launchpad.

Research has shown that safe, stable, affordable housing plays a role in a whole range of socio-economic outcomes, including better educational outcomes and employment prospects.

Better housing makes for better students and better workers and better citizens. Better homes make for better communities. It makes sense if you imagine the challenge of planning your future when from day to day you face uncertainty about having a roof over your head. Imagine the difficulty in getting and maintaining a job without having a stable home base.

Today I want to tell you about a specific CMHC program that is showing positive returns on many levels. It could be considered a model in giving youth opportunities for experiential learning and pathways to employment.

For almost 20 years, CMHC has been partnering with indigenous organizations to help in the transition of first nations and Inuit youth from school to employment. CMHC's HIIFNIY program is targeted to indigenous youth needing assistance in overcoming barriers to employment. Through this initiative, unemployed youth between the ages of 15 and 30 gain valuable experience and on-the-job training in the area of housing. This could include administration or office positions, or jobs in the areas of maintenance, construction, renovation, and tenant relations. These paid internships can last from eight weeks to two years, depending on the project.

This experience allows youth to feel a sense of pride that they are contributing to making their communities better places to live while at the same time having an opportunity to test and consider a career in housing.

CMHC provides wage subsidies to indigenous organizations, which then offer their time to sponsor and train the interns. Through 2016-17 and 2017-18 budget allocations, approximately $13 million in federal funding has been committed to this program, creating close to 1,300 internships for indigenous youth. The goal of HIIFNIY is to help youth pursue long-term employment in the housing sector. The young people involved in the HIIFNIY program aren't just building much-needed houses, they are building confidence and community.

I have an example to give you. For example, in Naujaat, Nunavut, the internship organized through the Repulse Bay Housing Association gave young adults the chance to learn how to work with tenant files, do maintenance, carpentry, and inventory. According to Gloria, the housing manager who oversaw the work, the youth gained valuable skills and work experience, and it helped to provide for their families as well. Two of the interns went on to get jobs with the construction companies that built two 10-unit buildings in the community.

CMHC believes that indigenous youth need to be part of the conversation on housing and how it affects their own communities. We are supporting indigenous communities to develop housing solutions that meet their unique needs, and part of this is building capacity in future housing leaders. That's why we include youth in several forums on housing across the country.

At a recent Winnipeg forum, a housing manager compared the involvement of a young person with the building of an actual house. He said if you have built a good foundation, that house is going to stand up for years.

Capacity building programs like HIIFNIY are especially important as the Government of Canada makes efforts to close the gap in living conditions between indigenous people and non-indigenous people, and to facilitate self-determination and advance the recognition of rights.

This approach is key to the distinction-based housing strategies currently being co-developed by Indigenous Services Canada and national first nations, Inuit, and Métis organizations. CMHC is proud to be playing a supporting role in this work because we know that better housing outcomes lead to positive outcomes like providing a foundation for youth to get a positive start in the workforce.

That concludes my opening remarks, Mr. Chair. I would be pleased to answer any questions at this time.

● (1645)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now from Volunteer Canada, we have Paula Speevak, president and chief executive officer. The next seven minutes are yours.

Ms. Paula Speevak (President and Chief Executive Officer, Volunteer Canada): Thank you.

Hello. I will address everybody in English, and can answer questions in both languages.

[*Translation*]

All of our documentation is available in English and in French.

[*English*]

To begin with, I just want to thank you for considering the very important topic of how our experience in the community helps build our capacity in general. Volunteer Canada has been doing a considerable amount of work on both youth engagement and skills-based volunteering. I thought I would give an overview of both of those areas and share with you some of our insights.

In the past, we've looked at skills-based volunteering as a way for someone with professional experience or a specialty in education to share that experience and skill with an organization. More and more, though, we're looking at skills-based volunteering as a way of transferring skills. It could be someone with some skills and experience having the ability to share that with a non-profit organization or a community, but it could also be someone who wants to develop those skills. As well, it could be somebody who can coach somebody else who wants to develop those skills. When you think about the different combinations of skills-based volunteering, we're really talking about transferring skills at the same time as building the capacity of organizations and communities.

One of the things that we are very careful about in terms of skills-based volunteering—and the colleague before was talking about some of the interviews that had been taking place with youth who were looking to volunteer as a way of gaining experience—is to promote and facilitate the transfer of skills without exploiting people. As we all know, youth and people in work transitions are very concerned about gaining experience. At the same time, we need to be careful not to undermine the paid workforce and not to take advantage of that desire to gain experience.

Youth aged 15 to 24 have the highest volunteer rate in the country. Sixty-six per cent of youth aged 15 to 19 volunteer, and there is a myth that people volunteer in that age group because of mandatory community service programs in high school or community service learning in universities. Actually, 80% of youth are volunteering because they choose to on their own. There may be those other benefits.

When we look at generations of volunteers, we see that the incoming generations are much more goal-oriented, value higher education, have a sense of mobility, are at ease with technology, are quite autonomous, and have multiple roles in communities. How this plays into our choices of volunteering means that we're volunteering for many reasons. We're very lucky here that Statistics Canada, in the general social survey, tracks volunteering and gives us insight into how people volunteer at different stages and ages. We know that people look for volunteering because they want to help in the community. That's the top reason. When we look at the second reason people volunteer, that's when we start to see the differences between the generations and between the different age groups. For example, it is true that many younger volunteers are looking at volunteering as a way of gaining experience and developing skills, while older adults may look at volunteering as a way to stay connected and prevent social isolation. We all have personal goals. In the past, I think we believed that to volunteer, you needed to be altruistic and only want to help community.

What we learned over time is that we all benefit from volunteering. There is always something to gain, so having a reciprocal relationship means that we could attend to our own personal goals and growth at the same time as helping community. Someone might be interested in a population that they care very much about. Perhaps it is older adults. Perhaps they're interested in a locality and investing in their neighbourhood. Perhaps it has to do with a skill or an opportunity. There are many lenses through which people look for volunteering.

On the idea of looking at volunteering and experience gained as a way of bridging to employment, one of the things that we have learned is that the language we use when we describe a volunteer opportunity doesn't always lend itself to people seeing those skills as transferable, nor does it lend itself to employers seeing those skills and competencies as transferable.

● (1650)

What we're doing is training within non-profit organizations on different ways of describing opportunities. I'll give you an example. If I tell you that I have volunteered to help run a bake sale, you might think of cooking, baking, and recipes. But if I told you that I purchased supplies, I did promotion, I trained part-time shift workers to staff the bake sale over a three-day period, I dealt with cash, etc., then you may see some of those skills as transferable. One of the things that I passed around to members of the committee is some position descriptions that are written in that fashion. First, you'll see that there's a title which is trying to be descriptive and also something that you could see linking to employment. There's the goal, there are skills required, but there's also skills developed. The terms that we're using come from the National Occupational Classification system, so that one could easily transport and see transferring those skills to employment. Again, if we're talking about leadership, motivating others, logistical arrangements, those are things we could relate to as transferable skills for employment, and they absolutely come from many volunteer experiences.

This tool that I've passed around really illuminates the way in which we can make that bridge. The other thing is to talk about transferable skills that many times come from life experiences. If somebody is, for example, stamp collecting as a hobby, they may not realize that this requires organizational skills, an interest in geography, and perhaps some visual aesthetic in terms of display. There are all kinds of skills that come from many things we do in life.

We'll also see some cards that I've passed around. It's something that we're doing in the non-profit sector. The idea there is looking at how someone presents themself. If someone comes and says they're a gardener, you might think the most obvious thing is to ask them to tend the garden in the nursing home, but what if they want to expand their skills? You see that they like to be outdoors. Perhaps they know nature well and they can take a group of youth on a nature hike.

In closing, what I want to say is that volunteering is absolutely a vehicle for developing skills, for sharing skills, and for building capacities of individuals, organizations, and communities. The sensitivity has to be with the organization, so that they can make those experiences positive and not exploit or take advantage of people looking for opportunities. At the same time, they're making sure that when people come to volunteer, there is a passion and an interest in what the organization does in addition to the personal goals of developing skills, so that we have that mutual, reciprocal relationship.

● (1655)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

First up for questions, we have MP Falk, please.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you all for being here today and offering your knowledge and experience to us in this sector of experiential learning.

When I was in university, we had an opportunity in one of my classes to have 5% of our grade if we did 20 hours of volunteering. It was an easy 5%. I volunteered with numerous organizations within the city and doors opened up for me. I volunteered at the local sexual assault centre and they were willing to give us training for volunteers to take a phone at night. Here I was, a university kid, taking calls from people who were having flashbacks. This was a great experience for the real world, when I have somebody in my office who's having a traumatizing flashback. It wasn't mandatory that we had to volunteer 20 hours, but an optional mandatory. It was great and it led to all these different opportunities for many of my classmates.

I did have a couple of questions. I had a professor in university who said the most you're ever going to volunteer is throughout your degree, and then you'll find that it'll go down. I'm wondering if there's truth to that, or if you notice that there are more students in university who do volunteering as opposed to people who have a family or are in the workforce?

Ms. Paula Speevak: Did you want me to take that?

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: It's for whomever.

Ms. Paula Speevak: One of the things we track is volunteer rates. We ask, for instance, whether a person volunteered in the last 12 months. Youths 15 to 24 have the highest volunteer rate, but when you think about the overall average of Canadians, 44% of Canadians 15 and over volunteer, which is already a high rate. It does fluctuate. It goes down a bit between the ages of 25 and 34. That's the period of time where there is often preoccupation and focus on career development, housing, partnering, and all kinds of other things.

It picks up again...in fact if you have school-aged children in the home, then your volunteer rate has risen. The other thing is that over time, the number of hours increases. So older adults, about 36% of those 65 and over, volunteer, but they volunteer an average of 223 hours a year. On the flip side of that, the youth, who have a 66% rate, will volunteer about 110 hours a year. So that makes sense in terms of time.

The other difference is in the kinds of things people choose, as well as the personal benefits people report.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you. Does anybody else wish to answer?

Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann: If I may, in the 15-odd-years that I've been writing reference letters for students and looking at student resumés, I haven't seen a single student who has not volunteered. They don't just volunteer at one place, either; they volunteer at 20 places. These resumés are astounding. It's quite different, and it's a generational difference. When I was a student, all you had to do was get through school and move on, and this has changed. What I see in students volunteering is a range of volunteer opportunities that seem strategic and instrumental, and others that are clearly not, others that are similar to your experiences

All students know that, and I would certainly say that's true, but I'm also sometimes worried that this massive amount of volunteering that at times happens alongside paid work and worrying about getting excellent marks to get into postgraduate programs is taking a toll. We are seeing something of an epidemic of mental health problems at universities that I'm sure you're all familiar with, and I can't help thinking that some of that may be related to the overextension in volunteering, paid work, and just chasing the top marks in order to get into postgraduate programs. That seems to be something that's unique to the last 10 years or so.

● (1700)

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I know I found some of my toughest times were working, volunteering, and going to school. I also had a baby when I was going to school. I had a very supportive husband who was great. It was very taxing, but I find those moments to be character-shaping, and those experiences help us a lot once we get to where our goal is and where we're planning to go.

We had some witnesses a couple of weeks ago who mentioned the trend of students going to university, receiving a degree, and then going into the trades because they cannot find work. I don't know if any of you would know this, but do they use the skills they've acquired volunteering while doing their degree when they go into an apprenticeship or trades program?

That's kind of a broad question.

Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann: I'll attempt an answer. I don't know because we don't follow people, track people, in that way. We don't know how skills are being used. I think it's correct that universities have become important feeder schools for colleges—not just in the trades but also in the diploma programs in colleges. What I hear from a lot of students who do that is that they get the applied skills that they don't get at university. So they might take a sociology program —if I speak about my own discipline—and then go to college and do a diploma in human resources management or something like that.

There seems to be, though, a sense that those transferable skills the previous speaker mentioned are not always clear to students as they're graduating. They're seeking more applied skills to be more competitive on the labour market.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Mr. Morrissey, please.

Mr. Robert Morrissey (Egmont, Lib.): Thank you, Chair.

My question is to Ms. Speevak. I agree with your comments describing volunteer positions. You accurately articulate what it is you're doing.

Could you comment on how you can ensure that potential employers place the same value on volunteer work that the employee, the student, does? Sometimes they may evaluate it but not attach a value to it.

Ms. Paula Speevak: That is a great question.

One of the things we're trying to promote.... First, we're working with organizations, and organizations are creating these volunteer opportunity descriptions in a manner that uses the competencies from the National Occupational Classification system. When somebody has volunteered, they are able to use that language in their resumé, as opposed to just saying what they've done. We're encouraging that.

We're also trying to create a program called *Programme d'enseignement bénévolat* It was developed by the Centre d'action bénévole de Québec, in Quebec City. It is a certificate that, instead of saying, "Thank you for volunteering"—which is great—says, "Thank you for volunteering, and when you volunteered, you demonstrated the following skills", and it will list leadership skills, promotional skills, public speaking skills, etc. That certificate can be attached and included. We're working with organizations—

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Who issues the certificate?

Ms. Paula Speevak: Any volunteer can be issued this certificate.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: By whom? What's the name of the organization?

Ms. Paula Speevak: The volunteer centre of Quebec City, the Centre d'action bénévole de Québec. A number of other volunteer centres in Quebec are starting to use this program. We're looking at that.

Mr. Robert Morrissey: Good. Thank you.

Dr. Lehmann, one of your comments was about the inability to transfer academic success into professional employment success, where you're striving to reach for the top, to have the highest academic achievements, but your achievements do not necessarily line up with professional requirements. You also related that to not being well-connected within the field you're going for. Could you elaborate a bit on that? Given that Canada is one of the G7 countries, a wealthy country, a leading industrial and academic country, how can government in its programming better address that particular issue?

● (1705)

Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann: There's potentially two ways to answer this question. One of them might be that a lot of young people come to university with less than well-informed career goals. What I see in my research, and just casually talking—I teach first-year courses—to students, is that everybody wants to be a lawyer or maybe a doctor. Perhaps we could step back a bit and give young people in schools career information that's more realistic, that doesn't allow young people to come out with goals that are commendable but.... Surely we need more than just lawyers and doctors for a country like Canada to function well.

To me, the fact that many of the young people in my study did not go to medical school but instead became public health nurses or occupational therapists is actually not a bad thing. It is a bad thing only if it is a career move that the young person later regrets. If it's one they make willingly and happily and quietly, it's a different story.

Part of the problem is the data seems to suggest that the people who make these downward shifts tend to be from less-advantaged backgrounds. They come with higher aspirations and somehow get frustrated, if that's the right word, along the way.

It's tricky because I don't want to say they shouldn't aim high. I don't want to say that working-class kids in high school should be told not to become doctors or lawyers. That's not my point, but maybe my point is that some more accurate and realistic career advice early on would help. I think it could also help to think a bit more about how we support people in postgraduate professional programs. They're very expensive. I know that not a single one of these programs would come out and say they're trying to not admit poor people. I've done some of these presentations to professional faculties and they often say, "That's not our intention. We want to get the best people into the program", but quite often it comes out that way. Some people cannot get that experience and don't have those connections to be competitive in the end.

Maybe there are ways at university we can guide young people who do not have the connections through their families into internships, into placements, into legal aid offices, into working with doctors, and shadowing doctors. Maybe we can find ways in which universities can play a more active role in helping young people to do that, to gain those connections. I think once they establish them, things work out much better.

In my follow-up study, I see that young men and women who go into public health and nursing do well once they get their placements. They find employment, they connect, and they build networks through their programs—but they need to get into them first.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Madam Trudel, please.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel (Jonquière, NDP): I'd like to welcome the witnesses and thank them for being here.

My first question is for Professor Lehmann.

Mr. Lehmann, I'd like to take advantage of your experience to ask whether apprenticeship programs for skilled trades could be expanded by giving employers or workers subsidies. I'll tell you why I ask.

Some of the entrepreneurs I have visited in my riding, and other parts of Quebec, have told me that a number of their employees are retiring. Given that the population is getting older, many workers have been retiring for a while now. These employees, who know how to operate the equipment and are familiar with the work processes, would like to be able to pass on their knowledge. That way, knowledge would be transferred more effectively and young workers joining the company would benefit. Since small and medium-sized businesses are often the ones affected, they can't afford to pay both an employee who is two years away from retirement, for instance, and, at the same time, a young person who is new to the company.

I'd like to hear your thoughts on that.

● (1710)

[*English*]

Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann: That is a very important question. Of course, apprenticeship is one of these forgotten transition pathways in Canada but is one that offers tremendous opportunities. As it happens, some of my other research is about apprenticeships. I have done interviews with young apprentices, mostly young people who started in high school apprenticeships either with the Ontario youth apprenticeship program or the Alberta registered apprenticeship program.

One of the issues that has emerged in these interviews mostly with apprentices rather than employers is on concerns that employers have about investing in young people and having that investment stolen by other employers who don't invest. It's a fear of poaching that seems to be a big issue, and the expenses of training and maybe not knowing whether the trained person will stay with you over time.

As you can probably tell from my name, I am German. I grew up in Germany. My father was a tradesperson and he apprenticed, so I have some kind of personal connection even though I have never been one.

I think we need to find a way in Canada to make apprenticeship a better pathway for young people, but also for employers. This means to a large extent, in a lot of the efforts I am familiar with through my work, attracting young people into apprenticeships and giving them an incentive to go into apprenticeships. That's been through public relations campaigns.

I don't know if you recall 10 or 12 years ago during the height of the oil boom in Alberta, you'd go to the movie theatres and there were ads for apprenticeships before the movie started. That's one part of it, but at the same time we need to advertise to employers that this is a valuable pathway. It's part of a social contract in which you can play a part in terms of training and developing the next generation of workers.

You are absolutely right, trades workers are retiring. A lot of trades are not as much at risk of being automated as many other jobs we have in manufacturing. You can't easily automate construction work. You can't easily automate other kinds of work where apprentices are being trained. Considering we are in a period where we are rethinking energy and how we use energy and what kind of energy sources we're using to produce things and build houses, it is a huge area for young people to become involved in.

In my experience, the young people who enter apprenticeships tend to be exceptionally proud of the work they do and tend to not regret being apprentices. They find that they contribute a lot to society. In interviews I have done, there is a lot of pride in seeing a house on which they worked or seeing people leaving a car dealership with a car that's running properly, and an immediate sense of satisfaction that people like me don't usually get in the work we do. I think that's a pathway.

To come to your question, should the government financially support employees, I think definitely there are ways that could be done. As we all know, the carrot probably works better than the stick. People have tried tax levies for those who don't train or tax subsidies for those who do train, but I think subsidies for companies that are willing to take on apprentices and make that contribution would be a very important step forward.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

[*Translation*]

Ms. Karine Trudel: I think I'll wait until the next round to ask my question.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Next up we have MP Long, please.

Mr. Wayne Long: Thank you to our witnesses this afternoon.

Ms. Speevak, I want to start with you. In my riding, Saint John—Rothesay, we have a lot of poverty. I do a lot of work with non-profit organizations in the riding. Volunteering and unpaid internships obviously speaks for itself, but in fields that you want to do...it's crucial. There are a lot of low-income youth and families who can't afford to volunteer or take unpaid internships because they have to work somewhere. They have to make some money. Obviously, that's an economic barrier.

Can you tell me what you would suggest? In your opinion, what would be the ideal Canada youth jobs program to alleviate that?

Then I'll go to Mr. Lehmann with the same question.

● (1715)

Ms. Paula Speevak: That's a good question.

I make a distinction between unpaid work and volunteering. At Volunteer Canada, we don't promote unpaid internships. For us, internships are either paid internships or they're associated with an educational program where there are clear learning objectives and are part of a package where someone gets accredited and so on.

When you volunteer, typically speaking, you would do so six to eight hours a week perhaps, if you're doing a half day or a full day, but we don't promote volunteering full-time. That is because it is understood that would be taking on a role that likely ought to be paid. Also, particularly for people in work transitions, whether it's a parent on parental leave trying to come back to the workforce, or a youth, or a newcomer, we want to make sure there is time and space for other pursuits. That's one thing.

The second thing is this. You're asking about balance, and I think that one could look at the concerns you have about community, and shaping your community and being active participants in neighbourhood associations or community associations. That's a very important type of volunteering, particularly in terms of creating the future in the community and society that you want. I think that's why in Quebec there's a different sense. The words used for volunteering would be "autonomous community action", that's the best translation, and there's a sense of *entraide*, people supporting one another in informal ways as well. We promote that in addition to those experiences that can also develop skills.

Mr. Wayne Long: Do you see any opportunity to tweak the Canada summer jobs program at all into a hybrid? I don't know if you'd call it that or not. We've done interviews. Last week we had meetings with CASA, and there were two representatives from UNBSJ SRC with CASA. They're proposing an expanded Canada summer jobs program that also goes into the school year because they have a challenge. They have these great Canada summer jobs programs, but when they go back to school they have to start looking for a job again because obviously the non-profits, or what have you, can't continue on.

Do you see any way we could tweak that program to entice people to stay with it longer? Maybe if they volunteer so many hours, they can have an extension of the program into the fall or winter. Do you see any way we can tweak that program to make it better?

Ms. Paula Speevak: I have a couple of thoughts.

If there's summer employment, one of the things we also encourage at Volunteer Canada is for employers to support employees in volunteering as part of their workday. You may know that of the 12.7 million Canadians who volunteer, a third report that they get support from employers. For example, it could be a half a day a month, or it could be a group volunteering activity. Perhaps as part of that commitment, employers, in taking on and hiring summer students, could be looking at personal goals and looking at some kind of community.

Mr. Wayne Long: I believe it's contagious. I used to be involved with a hockey team. We initially made our players volunteer, but after that first round, they wanted to volunteer.

Mr. Lehmann, do you have any comments on how we can create a better Canada summer jobs program? Also, perhaps you can comment on the economic barriers for people with low incomes or living in poverty, and how they just can't afford to volunteer or have unpaid internships.

Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann: There are two things. Don't make it a summer program. Make it a Canada youth employment program and have it run. Young people want to work. We know that. Often when we look at young people, we're looking at the old south and sweatshops, but young people want to be out working. It's a great idea to give them opportunities to develop skills and help them in the ways some of the speakers have spoken about.

Part of an expanded summer employment program could also be understanding how this kind of work complements what they do at school, enabling them to see some connections between what they learn at school and what they learn at work, and to observe a skills transfer between the two. Maybe it would make school more meaningful for people who are also working if they could see how school connects to what they do in the workplace. Particularly in the case of students at risk, it may help them to see the value of being in school. That's often a really tricky thing, but there are real benefits to it.

● (1720)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann: If you don't mind, I want to quickly do a shout-out to the housing volunteering program that Luisa Atkinson spoke about. It seems to me that this is the kind of volunteering program where there is an immediate benefit to those who volunteer, in terms of developing housing that they can live in or benefit from, or that improves the housing condition. Maybe that's a bit of an answer to your question as well, in the sense that even if you work for free, it's not exploitative if you develop something that directly benefits your own community. More of that would be great.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Now MP Fortier, please.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: I wanted to thank you and I want to continue with Madame Atkinson and your presentation. You described one program to us, and I'm curious to know if you have other programs you'd like to share with us, that would either be similar to it or could broaden some of the youth opportunities that we have in our country.

Ms. Luisa Atkinson: This program is specifically geared towards indigenous youth, but CMHC has other research and other housing programs that are not specifically apprenticeships or volunteer programs. We work hand in hand with non-profit organizations or housing providers so that they can create their own programs. If anything comes to mind, it's Habitat for Humanity, for example, where we don't lead the programs but we support them in running their programs.

This one is more uniquely specific to indigenous people because the housing market in communities is not the same as everywhere else in Canada.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Madame Speevak, I was wondering if you had any data on the community of youth newcomers, if they participate in volunteering, and if a similar program might be interesting to integrate youth newcomers.

Ms. Paula Speevak: As I was mentioning, 44% of Canadians aged 15 and over volunteer. For newcomers who have been in Canada for less than five years, it's 39%, which is not significantly less. The difference, though, is that in many small cultural communities, particularly where there are many newcomers, they may be very active in providing informal support to neighbours, other family members, and extended family members who are new and arriving, so a lot of informal support and mutual aid happens within newcomer communities, in addition to newcomers volunteering in the community at large.

That's definitely the case. In fact, one of the things that's quite interesting is looking at youth, who acquire language quicker than their parents, actually volunteering to help parents acquire language skills. That's been awesome. You've probably heard many stories about youth acting informally as interpreters for their parents, but there's been some formalization of that as well, which is quite wonderful.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: I'm thinking now about evaluation, and the data or information that you receive on the youth when they participate. What kind of feedback do they give—either Volunteer Canada or maybe Madame Atkinson, in your program—on the experience they've had? Is it generally positive? What would be something that could be constructive in understanding whether what they're doing is really helping them move forward?

Ms. Paula Speevak: One of the things that we learned in doing some focus groups with youth volunteers is that there is, unfortunately, some ageism in the non-profit sector at some points. I remember a youth who was saying how concerned he was about food security, so he went to a meal program wanting to participate in providing meals and interact with people who were participating. He was put alone in a room, asked to fold tea towels with the floral pattern outside for hours. Someone came in and criticized that some were not folded the right way. It was so boring and so demeaning. What a heartbreaking story for someone who was so passionate about food services. Sometimes there's an assumption that youth don't have a lot to offer in terms of their passion and compassion. I would say that's one thing we have heard and really encourage people to think about: the whole person, no matter what age, has a lot to offer.

The second thing we learned is that those who have a chance to reflect on their experience and make sense of it gain much more. It's one thing to work in a shelter or to interact with folks who are having difficulty, but to then have the opportunity to make sense of it, to think about what you've learned about yourself, about community, helps you then integrate it, whether it's for your life or for your career.

● (1725)

Mrs. Mona Fortier: I don't have much time left but I would like to ask Ms. Atkinson or Mr. Lehmann if they had a final comment. I have about a minute left.

Ms. Luisa Atkinson: I agree very much. At the end of their apprenticeship, we ask most of the interns a set of questions. We get a feel for how they learned or what they applied they skills to. Overwhelmingly, their eyes are open to the need in the community and what they can do to help change things. They start off trying to get a job and then they build a passion for housing and for helping their community.

One example I can give you is of a young lady in Wagmatcook First Nations. She was there to do some interviews with elders and building contractors to really find out what the needs of the community were. Having those conversations and asking the elders of the community about their need for housing gave her that inspiration to keep on going. As soon as you open that universe for youth, they step into it and they develop that passion.

The Chair: You have about 10 seconds left.

Mrs. Mona Fortier: Sorry, Mr. Lehmann, maybe you could answer in next round.

Thank you.

The Chair: Next up we have MP Falk, please.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Ms. Atkinson, I have a couple questions for you.

Where do the internships typically take place?

Ms. Luisa Atkinson: On Inuit territory and in first nations communities, but it's not limited. As long as there's a sponsor who's willing to train and prepare the intern, it can happen outside of the community.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: When you say sponsorship, is it somebody from the private sector who does sponsorship, or how does that work?

Ms. Luisa Atkinson: It could be. Typically it's a first nation that sponsors through their housing management program, or it could be, for example, a technical service provider who does inspections on reserves. It could be part of the Yukon Housing Corporation, if they have an administrative position. It could be a number of things. It really depends on the position and what they're learning as opposed to who the sponsor is.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: How does that process work? Does CMHC go to the sponsors or do you find that sponsors are going to CMHC asking to participate in this?

Ms. Luisa Atkinson: It's actually both. The program is currently very oversubscribed. There is no limit of sponsors who are looking for this opportunity. We work hand in hand with our first nations communities as well as our Inuit partners. That's a natural linkage right there. We often find other groups like Habitat for Humanity or a tribal council or a non-profit organization that are looking for those kinds of opportunities.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: What proportion of those in the housing internship initiative for first nations and Inuit youth participants are able to secure long-term employment? What success is there?

Ms. Luisa Atkinson: That's a little bit harder to correlate because of the fact that market employment is not the same on reserve. The opportunity for employment is much reduced. I would say that a larger number continue in housing.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: I don't know if you mentioned this in your presentation, so if you could please remind me, what is the age of youth who qualify?

Ms. Luisa Atkinson: Ages 15 to 30.

Mrs. Rosemarie Falk: Okay, I'm fine.

Do you want some time?

Mr. Mark Warawa: Dr. Lehmann, you talked about different valuable pathways, different options for youth, and you touched on apprenticeships. You also highlighted that career goals need to be realistic in helping guide the next generation to where those goals are, and that trades are definitely a very valuable option for them. There is potential for a career that provides a good income and a good quality of life. If they're enjoying the trades, building and creating things, it can be very satisfying.

My first question is, how do we encourage more youth to get into the trades? The previous government had the trade apprenticeship program. It was quite successful. We've reached success to a certain level. How can we do better with this government?

The second question is on geriatrics. My responsibilities in this Parliament are ensuring that we have quality palliative care for our aging population. Whether it's in home care, hospice care, or geriatric nursing, there are great opportunities for a creditable career that they can progress through as they enhance their skill set, and it can start with volunteering, going into an apprenticeship and on. How do we get more people involved with geriatrics?

● (1730)

Dr. Wolfgang Lehmann: I'll start with the apprenticeships. Quite often, it seems to me that apprenticeships are a second-best option for a lot of families. We think of it as a career pathway that we channel people into who maybe don't do too well at school. I think there needs to be a rethinking. There needs to be a rethinking that we look at apprenticeships as a valuable career pathway for anybody, just the same way we think of university as a pathway for which you need to qualify in certain ways. I think apprenticeships require a certain frame of mind, a certain type of interest, and certain kinds of goals that people have rather than something we channel people into.

How can we increase it? I know high schools have done a lot more to promote apprenticeships, but the reality often is that most people who advise young students in high school have come through the academic system and this is something they're far more comfortable with, something they understand. It's a pathway they can help students with, whereas apprenticeships aren't. Apprenticeships remain a foreign pathway that most high school counsellors probably don't know too much about. We also know that often in schools it's the shop programs and the trades programs that are being shut down because they're not cheap; they're expensive and need equipment. If you want young people to have access to good equipment, it needs to be constantly updated. There's a dilemma there. We steer people away from this in school, and it's not entirely surprising that in Canada most of the people who enter apprenticeship training are in their twenties or later. They're doing it as maybe not a second career, but as something they go into long after they finish high school.

There are ways that we maybe need to shift how we think about that. It's hard to say how you can do that successfully, because despite all the youth apprenticeship programs in Alberta, Ontario, and all the other provinces across Canada, the enrolment rates remain stubbornly low. We still have only a small percentage of the labour force training in the trades. We haven't seen a huge increase in that. It's something that we certainly need to look at, and we need to do more research to find out, maybe with younger people, what the reason is.

The problem is that there's also a public debate, a public discourse that suggests you're not anything until you get a university degree. It's becoming this fundamental minimal thing you need to achieve in order to be successful. Even some of the apprentices I interviewed have said things like that. They're successful as apprentices and sometimes they'll say they wonder if they should maybe give university a chance in a few years. There's this sort of mindset.

About the geriatric workforce, my sense is that it's similar to what we see in apprenticeships. It's an area that people enter later in life. A lot of people retrain to do geriatric work once they're a bit older, maybe once they've had some personal experience doing this with parents or other family members. I don't do research in schools so I don't really know what very young people think, but as a sociologist I can tell you my department does studies in gerontology. There's not a lot of student interest in this, and I guess young people are simply not interested in what happens to old people. They don't want to think about that. This is where the big crisis looms. We need to somehow have a workforce in place that cares for our aging population, and we need to know what the population pyramid—well, it's not a pyramid anymore—or the population profile looks like. I think we need ways to let young people know about these options at an earlier age, and we need to involve employers more actively in coming out and speaking to young people.

● (1735)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Dr. Lehmann.

We are out of time, but I want to thank you all very much for your contributions to this study. I assure you we're moving forward with it, and looking to wrap this up before the summer.

The meeting is adjourned.

Published under the authority of the Speaker of the House of Commons

SPEAKER'S PERMISSION

The proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees are hereby made available to provide greater public access. The parliamentary privilege of the House of Commons to control the publication and broadcast of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees is nonetheless reserved. All copyrights therein are also reserved.

Reproduction of the proceedings of the House of Commons and its Committees, in whole or in part and in any medium, is hereby permitted provided that the reproduction is accurate and is not presented as official. This permission does not extend to reproduction, distribution or use for commercial purpose of financial gain. Reproduction or use outside this permission or without authorization may be treated as copyright infringement in accordance with the *Copyright Act*. Authorization may be obtained on written application to the Office of the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Reproduction in accordance with this permission does not constitute publication under the authority of the House of Commons. The absolute privilege that applies to the proceedings of the House of Commons does not extend to these permitted reproductions. Where a reproduction includes briefs to a Committee of the House of Commons, authorization for reproduction may be required from the authors in accordance with the *Copyright Act*.

Nothing in this permission abrogates or derogates from the privileges, powers, immunities and rights of the House of Commons and its Committees. For greater certainty, this permission does not affect the prohibition against impeaching or questioning the proceedings of the House of Commons in courts or otherwise. The House of Commons retains the right and privilege to find users in contempt of Parliament if a reproduction or use is not in accordance with this permission.

Also available on the House of Commons website at the following address: http://www.ourcommons.ca

Publié en conformité de l'autorité du Président de la Chambre des communes

PERMISSION DU PRÉSIDENT

Les délibérations de la Chambre des communes et de ses comités sont mises à la disposition du public pour mieux le renseigner. La Chambre conserve néanmoins son privilège parlementaire de contrôler la publication et la diffusion des délibérations et elle possède tous les droits d'auteur sur celles-ci.

Il est permis de reproduire les délibérations de la Chambre et de ses comités, en tout ou en partie, sur n'importe quel support, pourvu que la reproduction soit exacte et qu'elle ne soit pas présentée comme version officielle. Il n'est toutefois pas permis de reproduire, de distribuer ou d'utiliser les délibérations à des fins commerciales visant la réalisation d'un profit financier. Toute reproduction ou utilisation non permise ou non formellement autorisée peut être considérée comme une violation du droit d'auteur aux termes de la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*. Une autorisation formelle peut être obtenue sur présentation d'une demande écrite au Bureau du Président de la Chambre.

La reproduction conforme à la présente permission ne constitue pas une publication sous l'autorité de la Chambre. Le privilège absolu qui s'applique aux délibérations de la Chambre ne s'étend pas aux reproductions permises. Lorsqu'une reproduction comprend des mémoires présentés à un comité de la Chambre, il peut être nécessaire d'obtenir de leurs auteurs l'autorisation de les reproduire, conformément à la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur*.

La présente permission ne porte pas atteinte aux privilèges, pouvoirs, immunités et droits de la Chambre et de ses comités. Il est entendu que cette permission ne touche pas l'interdiction de contester ou de mettre en cause les délibérations de la Chambre devant les tribunaux ou autrement. La Chambre conserve le droit et le privilège de déclarer l'utilisateur coupable d'outrage au Parlement lorsque la reproduction ou l'utilisation n'est pas conforme à la présente permission.

Aussi disponible sur le site Web de la Chambre des communes à l'adresse suivante : http://www.noscommunes.ca